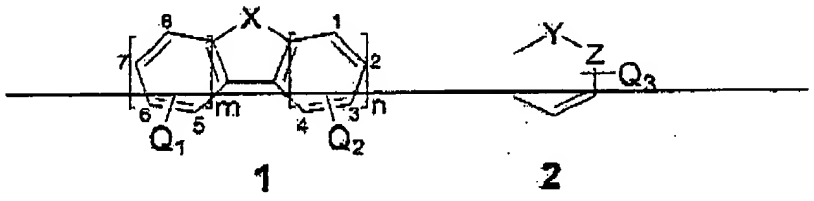
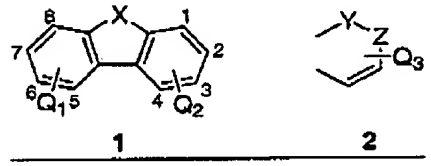
Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An infrared dye wherein the dye comprises a molecule of the formula 1





~~wherein m and n are the number of fused 6-membered aromatic rings connected to each side of the central moiety such that the first 6-membered aromatic ring, if present, is connected as shown in 1; and~~

wherein Q_1 and Q_2 are one of the same or different fused rings shown as **2** whereby one ring shown as **2** is connected at any of the two adjoining positions C_1 to C_4 at any orientation and another ring shown as **2** is connected to any of the two adjoining positions C_5 to C_8 at any orientation of the outer aromatic rings shown in **1** which may also include one or many substituents individually selected from the group consisting of R_1, a fused 5-membered ring or a 6-membered aromatic ring optionally substituted with 1 to 4 substituents individually selected from R_2, and fused polyaromatic rings optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from R_3 wherein R_1, R_2 and R_3 are individually selected from the group R; and

wherein X is selected from the group consisting of CO, O and S; and

wherein Y is individually selected from the group consisting of CO, O, ~~and~~ S, and Z is selected from CR_8 or N where R_6, R_7 and R_8 which may be the same or different, are selected from the group R; and

wherein Z is individually selected from the group consisting of CO, O, ~~and~~ S, and Y is selected from CR_{11} or N where R_9, R_{10} and R_{11} which may be the same or different, are selected from the group R; and

Q_3 -may be 0, 1 or more than 1 substituents that are individually selected from the group consisting of R_{12}, a fused 5-membered ring or a 6-membered aromatic ring optionally substituted with 1 to 4 substituents individually selected from R_{13}, and fused polyaromatic rings optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from R_{14} wherein R_{12}, R_{13} and R_{14} are individually selected from the group R; and

R is the group consisting of a hydrogen atom, a substituted or unsubstituted alkyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted aryl group, a substituted or unsubstituted aralkyl group, a halide atom, a hydroxy group, a substituted or unsubstituted amine group, a substituted or unsubstituted alkoxy group, a substituted or unsubstituted thioalkyl group;

wherein the infrared dye absorbs strongly in the near infrared region of the spectrum but poorly in the visible region of the spectrum.

2. (Original) An infrared dye composition comprising a molecule that can be described according to claim 1.

3. (Currently Amended) An infrared absorbing dye composition comprising a molecule ~~in accordingance~~ to claim 1 wherein the molecule is substituted with one or more bulky substituents. ~~are utilized.~~

4. (Currently Amended) An infrared absorbing ~~compound~~ molecule according to claim 1 wherein the molecule is substituted with one or more polar groups ~~substituents such as $-SO_3H$, $-NH_2$ and $-CN$ are utilized~~.

5. (Original) A solvent-based ink composition comprising a molecule that can be described according to claim 1.

6. (Previously Presented) A solvent-based ink according to claim 5 which is ink jet printer ink.

7. (New) An infrared absorbing molecule according to claim 4, wherein the one or more polar groups are selected from $-SO_3H$, $-NH_2$ and $-CN$.